

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for use in a collaborative system comprising the steps of: setting up a plurality of participants in a group to collaboratively communicate;

determining presence information of each of said participants in said group in accordance with a use of at least one communicative device associated with each participant and monitored by the collaborative system, wherein the collaborative system provides direct access to at least a telephone network and internet communications;

dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said participants, said collected presence information, and a set of mechanisms for a participant to select in conjunction with said displayed presence information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said participants in said group for a particular collaborative purpose; and

employing said displayed presence information and at least one mechanism of said set of mechanisms to initiate, through the collaborative system, communication with one or more other participants in said group;

wherein at least one of said mechanisms includes setting up using the collaborative system to set up one or more third party telephone calls via the telephone network that is in communication with the collaborative system to initiate communication with one or more said other participants in said group for said particular collaborative purpose.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

4. (Original) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein said step of dynamically displaying includes a step of automatically updating one or more of said plurality of display windows.

5. (Original) The method as defined in claim 4 wherein said step of automatically collecting presence information includes a step of automatically updating said presence information.

6. (Original) The method as defined in claim 5 wherein said presence information for a participant represents prescribed activities of said participant regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

7. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat, and voice call.

8. (Original) The method as defined in claim 6 further including a step of maintaining said collected and updated presence information and a step of notifying said participants of changes of status in said presence information for said participants in said group.

9. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 8 wherein said step of dynamically displaying further includes display windows for displaying at least documents and uniform resource locators (URLs) relating to said collaborative purpose.

10. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 9 wherein said set of mechanisms further includes persistent chat and said step of employing said displayed presence information and at least one mechanism further includes initiating a persistent chat session.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) Apparatus for use in a collaborative system comprising:

means for setting up a plurality of participants in a group to collaboratively communicate;

means for determining presence information of each of said participants in said group in accordance with a use of at least one communicative device associated with each participant and monitored by the collaborative system, wherein the collaborative system provides direct access to at least a telephone network and internet communications;

means for dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said participants, said collected presence information, and a set of mechanisms for a participant to select in conjunction with said displayed presence information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said participants in said group for a particular collaborative purpose; and

means for employing said displayed presence information and at least one mechanism of said set of mechanisms to initiate, through the collaborative system, communication with one or more other participants in said group;

wherein at least one of said mechanisms is setting up at least one third party call, and said means for setting up includes a means for using said third party call mechanism to initiate, through the collaborative system, communication with at least one other of the collaborative system to set up one or more telephone calls via the telephone network that is in communication with the collaborative system to initiate communication with one or more said other participants in said group for said particular collaborative purpose.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 12 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

15. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 14 wherein said means for dynamically displaying includes means for automatically updating one or more of said plurality of display windows.

16. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 15 wherein said means for automatically collecting presence information includes means for automatically updating said presence information.

17. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 16 wherein said presence information for a participant represents prescribed activities of said participant regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

18. (Previously presented) The invention as defined in claim 17 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat, and voice call.

19. (Currently amended) Apparatus for use in a collaborative system comprising:

a call set up unit to set up a plurality of participants in a group to collaboratively communicate;

a user agent unit to determine presence information of each of said participants in said group in accordance with a use of at least one communicative device associated with each participant and monitored by the collaborative system, wherein the collaborative system provides direct access to at least a telephone network and internet communications;

a visual display unit to dynamically display a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said participants, said collected presence information, and a set of mechanisms for a participant to select in conjunction with said displayed presence information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said participants in said group for a particular collaborative purpose; and

a device to employ said displayed presence information and at least one mechanism of said set of mechanisms to initiate, through the collaborative system, communication with one or more other participants in said group;

wherein at least one of said mechanisms includes ~~third party call set up and said set up unit includes said third party call set up apparatus, said set up apparatus being employed to set up third party calls to a means for using the collaborative system to set up one or more telephone calls via the telephone network that is in communication with the collaborative system to initiate communication with one or more said other participants in said group for said particular collaborative purpose.~~

20. (Canceled)

21. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 19 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

22. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 21 wherein said visual display unit automatically updates one or more of said plurality of display windows.

23. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 22 wherein said user agent unit automatically updates said presence information.

24. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 23 wherein said presence information for a participant represents prescribed activities of said participant regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

25. (Previously presented) The invention as defined in claim 24 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat, and voice call.

26. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 24 wherein said user agent unit further maintains said collected and updated presence information and notifies said participants of changes of status in said presence information for said participants in said group.

27. (Previously presented) The invention as defined in claim 26 wherein said visual display further displays windows to display at least documents and uniform resource locators (URLs) relating to said collaborative purpose.

28. (Original) The invention as defined in claim 27 wherein said set of mechanisms further includes persistent chat and said set up unit further includes setting up a persistent chat session.

29. (Canceled)